

# FIGHT the BITE!



## West Nile Virus Prevention Facts

- Use repellent with DEET
- Reduce mosquitoes
- Cover up From Dusk to Dawn

To protect yourself from West Nile virus, **prevention** is your best bet. Preventing mosquito bites reduces your risk of getting the disease. Take the common sense steps below to Fight the Bite!

### From Dusk to Dawn, Put Your DEET On

Mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active from dusk to dawn. So protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites when outdoors by using mosquito repellents that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide).

- For adults, use repellents containing up to 35% DEET.
- For children ages 2 months–12 years, use repellents containing up to 10% DEET. Do not put DEET on children's hands or feet; they may put them in their mouths. (Follow the label instructions carefully.)
- For children under the age of 2 months, do not use DEET, use mosquito netting over strollers and playpens.
- Use DEET when doing any outdoor activity – including sitting on your porch in the evening or taking a morning walk around the block.
- For **extra protection**, wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants while outdoors. Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or when unscreened windows are open.

### Why should I use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET?

Since there is no vaccine for West Nile virus, DEET is the most effective insect repellent available to keep from getting bitten. The more DEET (up to 50%) an insect repellent contains, the longer it will protect you.

### Is DEET safe?

Yes, products containing DEET are safe when used as directed.

Always follow these steps:

- Use enough repellent to cover exposed skin or clothing. Don't apply repellent to skin under clothing.
- Heavy application is not necessary for protection.
- Do not apply repellent to cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.
- Do not spray aerosols or pumps in enclosed areas or directly to your face.
- Spray your hands and then rub them carefully over the face, avoiding eyes and mouth.

### Should pregnant or nursing women use DEET?

Women who are pregnant or nursing can use DEET. Follow the directions carefully.

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### What are the symptoms of West Nile virus?

Most people will not even know they are infected and others experience flu-like symptoms. This is called West Nile fever. These people may have a fever, body aches, and possibly a rash. Of those who become infected, 1 in 150 will go on to have the more severe form of the disease. They may have a stiff neck, and muscle weakness, and they may become confused or disoriented. Such people may have seizures, go into a coma, and, in rare occasions, may die. People over the age of 50 are at highest risk of getting the severe infection.

### How soon do symptoms appear and how long do they last?

Symptoms can appear between 3 and 15 days after a mosquito bite from an infected mosquito. Symptoms of West Nile fever will generally last a few days. Symptoms of severe disease (encephalitis or meningitis) may last several weeks, and some symptoms may become permanent.

### How do I report dead birds to local authorities?

Dead birds may be a sign that West Nile virus is circulating between birds and the mosquitoes in an area. The Division of Wild Life Resources (DWR) is currently testing birds of the *corvid* and *raptor* families. If you find a dead or sick bird, please let them know. Report dead birds online at: <http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/wnv> or call your regional DWR office.

## Help Your Community Clean up

Mosquitoes don't care about fences, so it's important to control breeding sites throughout the neighborhood. Neighborhood clean up days can be organized by civic or youth organizations to pick up containers from vacant lots and parks, and to encourage people to keep their yards free of standing water.

## Reduce Mosquitoes Around Your House

Control mosquitoes – Get rid of all standing water.

- Turn over or remove containers in your yard where water collects, such as old tires, potted plant trays, buckets, toys, etc.
- Clean out birdbaths and wading pools at least once a week.
- Remove standing water on tarps or flat roofs.
- Clean clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Clean and stock garden ponds with mosquito-eating fish or mosquito dunks.
- Recycle old bottles and cans.
- Repair leaky faucets and sprinklers.
- Keep swimming pools clean or drain them.
- Repair door and window screens if torn.
- Keep weeds and tall grass cut short; adult mosquitoes look for these shady places to rest during the hot daylight hours.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites. (Electric "bug zappers" do not help since they usually attract more mosquitoes than they kill.)
- Keep window screens on campers, tents, and boats "bug-tight".

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